

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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E.O. 11652: DECLAS: 8/7/78
TAGS: MNUC, PARM, ENRG, TECH, AS
SUBJECT: US-AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENT: PRESS
GUIDANCE

1. GOA WILL WISH TO MAKE INTERIM US-AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR
COOPERATION AGREEMENT PUBLIC AS SOON AS NOTES HAVE BEEN
EXCHANGED (I.E. AS SOON AS FONMIN PEACOCK SIGNS AUSTRALIAN
REPLY TO US NOTE). FOLLOWING IS PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED
BY DFA.

2. BEGIN QUOTE:

THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR. ANDREW PEACOCK,
ANNOUNCED THE CONCLUSION ON 8 AUGUST OF AN INTERIM AGREEMENT
ON NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED STATES.

THE AGREEMENT, CONTAINED IN AN EXCHANGE OF NOTES BETWEEN
MR. PEACOCK AND THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA,
MR. PHILIP ALSTON, ACKNOWLEDGES AUSTRALIA'S LEADERSHIP ROLE
IN THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROLIFERATION AND
ESTABLISHES THE SAFEGUARDS TO COVER NUCLEAR COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, PENDING RENEGOTIATION OF THE
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1956 AUSTRALIA/US NUCLEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENT.
BOTH COUNTRIES WISH TO RENEGOTIATE THE 1956 AGREEMENT TO
BRING IT INTO LINE WITH THEIR NEW AND MORE STRINGENT SAFE-
GUARDS REAQUIREMENTS -- IN THE CASE OF THE UNITED STATES,
THE RECENT NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION ACT, AND IN THE CASE
OF AUSTRALIA, THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AS ANNOUNCED ON
24 MAY 1977.

MR. PEACOCK SAID THAT, AS WAS WELL KNOWN, AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED STATES HAD VERY SIMILAR SAFEGUARDS REQUIREMENTS. THIS WOULD FACILITATE THE EARLY CONCLUSION OF A NEW BILATERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED STATES, AS REQUIRED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON SAFEGUARDS FOR URANIUM EXPORTS. MR. PEACOCK SAID THAT ONE ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS HAS ALREADY BEEN HELD IN CANBERRA BETWEEN AUSTRALIAN AND UNITED STATES OFFICIALS AND THAT THE INTERIM AGREEMENT ENVISAGES IMMEDIATE COMMENCEMENT OF THE RENEGOTIATION AND THE CONCLUSION OF A NEW AGREEMENT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

MR. PEACOCK SAID THAT THE INTERIM AGREEMENT WOULD HELP AUSTRALIAN SAFEGUARDS NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES BY PROVIDING A PROCEDURE WHICH WOULD BE USED TO DEAL WITH CASES OF OVERLAPPING CONTROLS. SUCH OVERLAPPING ARISES WHEN, FOR EXAMPLE, AUSTRALIAN URANIUM IS EXPORTED TO A THIRD COUNTRY VIA THE UNITED STATES FOR ENVIRONMENT. WHEN THIS HAPPENS, THE THIRD COUNTRY NEEDS TO OBTAIN THE PRIOR CONSENT OF BOTH AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED STATES FOR ANY RE-TRANSFERS, HIGH ENRICHMENT OR REPROCESSING OF THE MATERIAL. UNDER THE ARRANGEMENT REACHED WITH THE UNITED STATES, THE UNITED STATES WOULD, IN SUCH CASES, ACT IN EFFECT AS AUSTRALIA'S AGENT SEEKING AUSTRALIA'S APPROVAL BEFORE GIVING ITS OWN. THIS WAS A SENSIBLE AND PRACTICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROCEDURE, MR. PEACOCK SAID.

THE INTERIM AGREEMENT REAFFIRMS THE SAFEGUARDS CONTAINED IN THE 1956 AGREEMENT; AND OTHER RELEVANT COMMITMENTS ENTERED INTO BY THE TWO COUNTRIES SINCE 1956. IT ALSO ADDS TO THAT AGREEMENT A PROVISION TO GIVE EACH GOVERNMENT CONTROL OVER ANY HIGH ENRICHMENT OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL TRANSFERRED BETWEEN THEM UNDER THAT AGREEMENT. END QUOTE.

ALSTON

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